

A3 13. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the detecting means comprise means for detecting electrical parameters and in that the reagent substance is an electrolyte.

A4 16. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the sensor is connected to a corresponding control unit for reading, comparing and checking the electrical parameter detected; the control unit being in turn connected to alerting means activated by the control unit itself through a signal generated by the control unit when the value of the reading differs from the preset reference value.

104021-15540001 17. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an audible warning device.

18. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of a warning light device.

19. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an alphanumeric display unit to display the value of the reading.

20. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the alerting means consist of an alphanumeric display unit to display a reference message corresponding to the result of the reading.

22. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the conduit portion forms an extension of one of the conduits that supply the handpieces and is equipped with an independent drain.

23. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the conduit portion is a part of a conduit that supplies one of the handpieces.

Concluded

a5 25. (Amended) The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the sample elements are housed in a container fitted inside the conduit portion in such a way as to permit the operating fluid to flow normally through the dental unit.

33. (Amended) The method according to claim 30, wherein the detecting step consists in observing the optical parameter which is visually perceptible.

a4 34. (Amended) The method according to claim 30, wherein the detecting step consists in measuring the optical parameter.

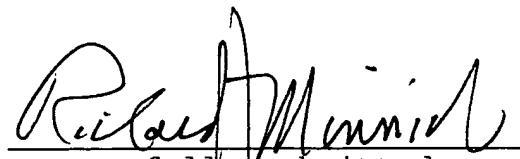
35. (Amended) The method according to claim 31, wherein the optical parameter is at least the coloring of the biofilm.

36. (Amended) The method according to claim 31, the optical parameter is the transparency of the biofilm.

a7 39. (Amended) The method according to claim 37, wherein the detecting step comprises a step of measuring electrical parameters.

#### REMARKS

It is respectfully submitted that the subject application is now in better condition for examination.

  
Respectfully submitted,  
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